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REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated August 23, 2006, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on November 23, 2006. Applicants respectfully request entry and consideration of the above noted amendments and the following remarks in response to the Office Action.

Applicants have amended claim 1. However, Applicants submit that support for such amendment is found in at least original claims 2 and 3. Further, Applicants submit that such amendment does not require a new search as the amendment includes only the subject matter of original dependent claims.

OBJECTIONS:

The abstract stands objected to. Applicants have replaced the legal phraseology therein and respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

The drawings stand objected to. Claim 11 has been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

The disclosure stands objected to. Applicants respectfully disagree that a reference to and brief description of the drawing is missing from the specification. Such information is included in paragraph 10. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

CLAIM REJECTIONS:

Claims 1-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants have amended claims 1, 7 and 10 and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,353,088 (*Fujitaka*) or U.S. Patent No. 4,808,262 (*Aneja*) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,834,172 (*Duran*). The Office Action states that the process of *Fujitaka* or *Aneja* differs from the claimed invention in that they do not teach heating tubes comprising a return tube nested inside of a supply tube. The Office Action further states that to substitute the nested tubes of *Duran* for the heat exchanger serving as heater of *Fujitaka* or *Aneja* to arrive at the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

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Applicants respectfully disagree. First, Applicants submit that it would have not been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to incorporate the heating apparatus of *Duran* into the heating mechanisms of *Fujitaka* or *Aneja*. There is no motivation, such as a suggestion to use such heating apparatus for the devolatilization of polymers, nor a teaching as to how to incorporate the heating apparatus of *Duran* into the heating mechanisms of *Fujitaka* or *Aneja*.

Second, even if the heating apparatus of *Duran* was incorporated into the heating mechanisms of *Fujitaka* or *Aneja*, one would still not arrive at the claimed invention. The heating apparatus of *Duran* does not teach, show or suggest introducing a heat transfer fluid into the supply tube, passing the heat transfer fluid (*e.g.*, the same fluid) from the supply tube to the return tube and withdrawing the heat transfer fluid from the return tube, as recited in the amended claims. *Duran* teaches passing one heat transfer fluid through specified conduits and another (*e.g.*, different) heat transfer fluid through nested conduits. Neither of the fluids re-enter the heating apparatus via another tube. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

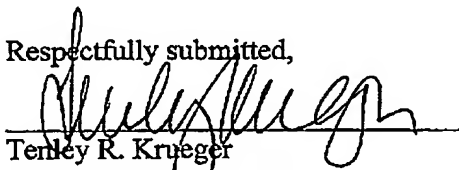
Applicants further submit that the Office Action stated that claims 15-16 were rejected. However, there was no substantive rejection of such in the Office Action.

In conclusion, Applicants submit that the references cited in the Office Action, neither alone nor in combination, teach, show, or suggest the claimed features. Having addressed all issues set out in the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request the same. Applicants further submit that the Office Action stated that claims 15-16 were rejected. However, there was no rejection of such in the Office Action.

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The prior art made of record is noted. However, it is believed that the secondary references are no more pertinent to the Applicant's disclosure than the primary references cited in the Office Action. Therefore, it is believed that a detailed discussion of the secondary references is not deemed necessary for a full and complete response to this Office Action. Accordingly, allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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